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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to assess the roles played by middle school educators while participating in a collaborative teaching program which combined a regular educator, a special educator, and their respective students for one period of content instruction per day. During one semester, six teams of two teachers in three different middle schools were observed simultaneously in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Coding included both what the teacher did and with whom, as well as the content of what the teacher said, leading to an identification of three types of interactive teaching. The program was based on the notion that optimum learning conditions for meeting the needs of mildly handicapped students is that of team teaching. It was designed to facilitate the inclusion of those learning disabled, mentally handicapped, or behaviorally/emotionally handicapped students needing resource or consultative services into classes with their middle school peers. Students identified as mildly handicapped were assigned to one interdisciplinary team at each age appropriate grade level in the schools they normally would attend. A variety of meanings for the term "team teaching" as revealed by a review of the literature is explored and procedures that have been recommended as being as valid for handicapped students as they are for nonhandicapped individuals are discussed. (Contains 42 references.) (Author/LL)

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Collaborative Teaching and the Mainstreamed Student

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Collaborative Teaching and the Mainstreamed Student

Abstract

The study was designed to assess the roles played by middle school educators while participating in a collaborative teaching program which combined a regular educator, a special educator and their respective students for one period of content instruction per day During one semester, six teams of two teachers in three different Middle Schools were observed simultaneously by two researchers. Observations were made at sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Coding included both what the teacher did with whom and the content of what the teacher said.

The program observed was based on the notion that optimum learning conditions for meeting the needs of mildly handicapped students is that of cooperative or team teaching. It was designed to facilitate the inclusion of those learning disabled, mentally handicapped, or behaviorally/emotionally handicapped students needing resource or consultative services into classes with their middle school peers. Students identified as mildly handicapped were assigned to one interdisciplinary team at each age appropriate grade levels in the schools they normally would attend.

A variety of meanings for the term team teaching as revealed by a review of the literature are explored and procedures that have been recommended as being as valid for handicapped students as they are for nonhandicapped individuals are discussed.

Collaborative Teaching and the Mainstreamed Student

Picture this classroom situation. Although it seems to have a few more students than is usual, there are two teachers working with the group. The students are at their desks with Math books open. One teacher is standing at the front near the chalkboard reteaching the process involved in working the sample problems on the board. The other who has been circulating giving special help to various youngsters moves to a round table where several students are beginning to gather. It is the typical sort of "teaming" arrangement common to a great many middle schools that makes everybody's work go more smoothly. Although the observer would have trouble picking them out, 10 of the youngsters have been labeled "mildly educationally handicapped."

Contrast this with a room in a similar school a few miles down the road where students look around furtively before they enter. Should you walk inside some of the students might cover their heads with jackets or sweaters to avoid being identified. Is this a detention or In School Suspension room? No, it's just the special education resource room where everyone is trying to avoid being labeled a SPED. It's the fly in the ointment of the Middle School.

The first classroom is a result of a special alliance between a middle school content area teacher and a special education teacher concerned with the traditional and exceedingly high failure rate among mildly handicapped early adolescents. The two joined forces to try to give all of their students optimum learning conditions through cooperative teaching. The class is part of a program which has evolved over several years and is in the process of being observed, defined, and evaluated.

In our efforts to help mildly handicapped students with instruction designed to meet their particular needs, we have tended to isolate these children from their peers by placing them in small and readily identifiable classrooms. When mainstreaming

came to be utilized as an answer to the concept of least restrictive environment, the self-identification process did not end. Because barriers had been erected between these special children and their peers, they saw themselves as less acceptable and therefore tried to avoid any association with the label. They were embarrassed to be seen entering or sitting in their small classes, cringed when recognized by the Special Education teacher outside of the classroom, and created derogatory nicknames for themselves. Not surprisingly, these mainstreamed students would often fail. Because they are separated from their peers, and identified as special, they label themselves as dumb.

Traditionally, mildly handicapped students have been provided assistance either through consultative services by special educators for the classroom teacher or through instruction in a resource setting by special educators. A more recent approach to meeting the needs of mildly handicapped students is that of cooperative or team teaching. This involves placing mildly handicapped students with their nonhandicapped peers in content classes such as science or social studies that are cooperatively taught by a regular classroom teacher and a special educator. It is this cooperative teaching model that was of interest to the authors.

ONE COOPERATIVE TEACHING MODEL

The project that will be described here was designed to facilitate the inclusion of those learning disabled, mentally handicapped, or behaviorally/emotionally handicapped students needing resource or consultative services into classes with their middle school peers.

To accomplish this goal a cooperative teaching model was developed in which a teacher of exceptional children was assigned to one team at each grade level in each of six middle schools in a county school system. Students identified as mildly

handicapped then were assigned to interdisciplinary teams at their appropriate chronological grade levels in the schools they normally would attend. These interdisciplinary teams were comprised of a content specialist representing each of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. It was agreed that the special education students should only be assigned to teachers on the team to which the special education teacher had also been assigned. The teachers of exceptional children assigned to the team worked with team members in scheduling the students and in assessing their individual needs. These special education teachers then joined their students in the classrooms where they were mainstreamed.

Cooperative teaching job descriptions called for the special education teacher to assist in delivering content and to collaborate in preparing daily lesson plans, making and giving tests, and maintaining sound classroom management. The regular classroom teacher was responsible for ensuring that all county and state curricular objectives were taught, and the special education teacher was responsible for suggesting modifications consistent with the needs of students (See Figure One). While this model has only been in full operation a short time, the results from regular classroom teachers, teachers of exceptional children, and students are encouraging.

The following fall , five of the six middle schools decided to try the cooperative teaching delivery model for special education students. There were varying degrees of utilization of cooperative teaching with a few teams choosing to have the special educator teach cooperatively in all five subject areas instead of the two originally recommended. As the year progressed, job descriptions were modified to reflect the needs and desires of each team but all of the decisions were made jointly rather than being mandated. The role of the special education teacher in moving from classroom to classroom had changed dramatically.

Five months into the school year, regular teachers, special education teachers and principals were interviewed to ascertain the progress of the cooperative teaching

model. The most significant aspect for the special education teachers was that they felt they and their students were really part of the school for the first time. The regular classroom teachers for the most part liked having a second person around to rephrase explanations, to monitor, to individualize. Almost everyone seemed to feel that both the social and academic situation was far better for the exceptional children--there was less teasing and more interdependence. Both principals and teachers reported that several parents felt that their children were doing better, liked school, and had a better attitude.

Many teachers continued with cooperative teaching even though some were initially skeptical about the model. Others feel this model of bringing not only the students but also the special education teacher into the mainstream may not be the right plan for all teachers for all seasons. As with any cooperative situation, team members must share similar philosophies or at least have compatible philosophies. The teachers themselves need to be flexible, willing to share ideas, committed to being organized and prepared each day, and able to listen to and accept constructive criticism. Above all they must not be intimidated by the sharing of a classroom with another professional with different strengths.

THE TEAM TEACHING MOVEMENT

After Goodlad and Anderson wrote The Nongraded Elementary School in 1959, educators began to explore the possibility that teachers would work better in concert than in isolation. Often it was reported as a way of organizing a school via teams so that teachers could work cooperatively together. (Blair & Woodward, 1964). Often it began as a voluntary cooperative activity among teachers who were attempting to attain the same objectives without the benefit of formal organization (Shaplin & Olds, 1964).

In secondary schools interdisciplinary team teaching was described as a useful variant in planning for staff utilization (Trump & Baynham, 1961) and was described as

two teachers regularly, purposefully, and deliberately working co-operatively in the planning, presenting, and evaluating of learning experiences for a single group of students. The lecture was to be delivered by the teacher most competent in the particular facet of the topic to be taught. In this arrangement, it was not thought necessary that all team members attend large group presentations because teacher aides could assist with supervisory tasks and teachers would be freed to spend time with individual pupils and in planning (Heller, 1963). But for other authors, team teaching in the upper grades meant only that teachers of a single subject would meet and plan together as in the high school department scheme (Beggs, 1968).

Lobb (1964) stressed that team teaching required the committed association of teaching professionals and should be used to involve teachers more completely in the solution of critical problems but he worried that it might be used only to reduce the number of teachers. Heathers (1964) on the other hand suggested that team teaching schemes were developed primarily to keep good people in the classroom and out of administration.

Singer called team teaching an organizational device which encompasses all aspects of the teaching-learning experience and said it might be defined as an arrangement whereby two or more teachers, with or without teacher aides, cooperatively plan, instruct and evaluate one or more class groups in an appropriate instructional space and length of time, so as to take advantage of the special competencies of the team members. (Beggs, 1968).

Team teaching was further explained as an organizational plan for teachers, children, space, and curriculum so that several teachers as a group would plan, conduct, and evaluate the educational program for all of the children assigned to them (Chamberlin, 1969). Since the process was designed to allow for more extensive cooperation in the teaching of the same set of students there was an implication that it would result in cooperation not only in the sharing of plans and objectives for the

students and the pooling of knowledge about the students but also in actually working collaboratively in that setting (Hanslovsky, Moyer & Wagner, 1969). The lack of literature on this aspect of teaming suggests that the ideal was seldom realized.

The literature reveals a variety of meanings for the term teaming. Special educators and medical people who deal with physically handicapped children see teams as consisting of parent, teacher, physician and child and often make the assumption one special education teacher and an aide function best in a self contained classroom (Baren, Liebl & Smith, 1978).

Although many books describe the functioning of early programs in a particular location which utilized team teaching, none of these authors mention the inclusion of exceptional children (Vars, 1969). After the advent of Public Law 94-142, some educators of exceptional children advocated interdisciplinary teams of individuals, including those from public agencies, with varied and specialized training who would coordinate their activities to provide services to children. Even then the predominant pattern of service delivery to students was one of the individual teacher doing the instruction with teams existing for preparing individual educational plans. (Golin & Ducanis, 1981).

The design and implementation of various team teaching schemes are defended because it makes life easier for teachers, but little evidence is given that documents improvements in the quality of instruction. Many writers mentioned the need for assessment and evaluation of processes but little seems to have been done other than describe various programs that met with overall success.Inadequately defined and described alternatives are thus offered to replace inadequately analyzed existing conditions, with the assumption that acceptance of the alternatives must be total and final. (Shaplin & Olds, 1964).

One district in California did try to evaluate with an experimental-control study during a summer session. Teachers in two schools used the same curriculum but only

one school used team teaching. Students and teachers kept logs and standardized tests were given. In describing teaming involving larger groups with one teacher, the teachers said they instructed as they would in a self-contained classroom and found minimal gratification because the larger the group, the shorter the attention span. The experimental group of teachers spent a little more time in preparation, had slightly better attendance and slightly more growth in reading skills. The student attitude ratings were the same. No statistical significance was calculated. (Wall & Reasoner, 1962).

Since team teaching involves the direction of learning activities by a coalition of persons, it is qualitative as well as quantitative. The rationale is based on the assumption that progress in education demands that active participants be knowledgeable in many facets of education research and experimentation (Johnson & Hunt, 1968). Although there are many reports on the results of team planning, few descriptors seem to exist of actual instructional procedures that were utilized. The teaching function itself must be analyzed carefully by all those involved. (Lobb, 1964).

Polos (1965) in extoling the virtues of the Claremont Plan describes its antecedents in Platoon Schools, the Winnetka Plan and the Pueblo Plan. He admits there has been little experimentation regarding team teaching on the junior high school level.

When the literature is reviewed, limited information can be gleaned as to the manner in which special education students are being integrated onto middle school teams. While increasing attention is being given to the fact that a significant number of handicapped students are being mainstreamed into regular classes, virtually no descriptive data exists in regard to the types of instruction being used or the integration of the special teacher into the regular middle school class. There are authors, however, who indicate that in general such an integration would be beneficial.

COMBINING TEAMING AND MAINSTREAMING

Studies confirm that basic rationales for instruction can be as valid for handicapped students as they are for nonhandicapped individuals. Some of the procedures that have been recommended for their efficacy include: provision of firsthand experiences, development of a rich experiential background, opportunity to apply basic skills in meaningful contexts, opportunity to develop critical thinking, data processing and human relation skills, opportunity to analyze personal values, and acquisition of information which contributes to lifelong interests (Ochoa & Shuster 1980; Patton, Palloway & Cronin 1987).

At the secondary level, Werner (1981) indicates that learning and mentally disabled students ought to be offered a full range of academic subjects as well as introduced to the area she calls positive affect. There are many strategies which are typically used by regular teachers such as role play, debate, art projects, discussion, and self-questioning summaries which are equally useful for special students to effectively increase retention of the material and enhance transfer to other subject areas (Bender 1985; Wong 1986).

A teacher may understand about a student's disabilities but not be able to help the student because of an inadequate repertoire of skills to deal with the problem (Lockledge, Lee, Hensley & Hadley 1985). Since there is a limited amount of information which can be found on how to teach specific content to special students (Curtis and Shaver 1980), it seems logical that teachers knowledgeable in their disciplines combine efforts with teachers specially trained to handle the mainstreamed students. Keller (1981) makes the specific suggestion that resource teachers coordinate with regular education science teachers who are teaching the subject to classes which contain mainstreamed students.

Renick (1985) found that learning disabled students in resource rooms perceived themselves more favorably in terms of cognitive competence, social acceptance, physical competence, and self-worth than did the middle school self-contained students. Her results suggested that the extent to which these students perceived themselves to be smart and confident was related to their perceived social acceptance from peers. Just as there are racist attitudes about fellow students there appear to be handicapist attitudes which will impede the integration of classes. Curtis (1982) showed that regular students can be prepared in advance for a mainstreaming effort especially if cooperative grouping and peer tutoring have been used. Shaver (1983) discussed how teachers can make nondisabled students aware of their handicapist attitudes and help mainstreamed disabled students cope more adequately with handicapism. Through Project MEDIA Louisville, Kentucky teachers developed a manual of intervention strategies designed to help mainstreamed as well as nonhandicapped students make the transition from elementary to middle school (Ashmore et al 1984).

OBSERVATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE TEACHING MODEL

If minimal attention has been paid to the model programs for integrating mildly handicapped student into regular education at the middle school level, even less attention has been given to collecting data about such integration. The authors therefore requested permission to conduct a research study in the county school system entitled An Analysis of the Interaction and Teaching Behaviors of Regular and Special Educators While Team Teaching. The study was designed to assess the roles played by educators while participating in the newly established cooperative teaching program which combined a regular educator, a special educator and their respective students for one period of content instruction in a middle school classroom.

The coding scheme which was presented was not designed to evaluate quality of instruction but rather to study instructional roles. So that no misunderstanding could develop regarding the efforts, it was agreed that the names of participants and schools would not be revealed in any of the reports or presentations that resulted from the study. Permission to conduct the study was granted.

The stated philosophy behind this cooperative program is one wherein the school seeks to meet the diverse social and educational needs of all middle school level mildly handicapped students who require services by an exceptional children's teacher at the resource or part time special class levels. The primary goal is to integrate special students as much as possible into the total school environment, and to provide instruction that will enable them to become more proficient in academic, emotional and social skills so as to facilitate successful functioning in the community. It was the goal of the researchers to see what processes teachers used to accomplish this ideal.

During one semester, six teams of two teachers in three different Middle Schools were observed simultaneously by two researchers. Of the twelve teachers observed, six were special educators and six were teachers certified for the grade level and subject being taught. All of the teachers were female but teams had various racial composition. Observations were made at all three grade levels (sixth, seventh and eighth) and in all four major content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies).

In order to check interrater reliability, it was decided that two observers would make coded observations of each teacher during the same time frame. All coded observations were made of the teachers and not of the students and took place at one minute intervals. Teachers were coded 3 times during an instructional period--for 5 minutes at the beginning of the lesson, 5 minutes during the middle of the period, and for 5 minutes near the end of the period. The following alphanumerical codes were used to address both the type of teacher-student interaction and the content of that interaction.

Coding what the teacher does and with whom:

1. Talking to the whole class or a substantial portion thereof
2. Listening to students with whole class attention
3. Speaking to a small group of students
4. Listening to a small group of students
5. Speaking to an individual or pair of students
6. Listening to an individual student
7. Teacher to teacher interaction
8. Watching students do assignment

Coding the content of what the teacher says:

A. Presentation of the lesson

B. Procedural Matters

C. Disciplinary Matters

D. Clarification or reteach

This coding was noted fifteen times during the period by making checks on a prepared forms (see Figure Two). The checks were then tallied and recorded on charts (see Figure Three) to show frequency in style of interaction for each teacher. The frequency of type of role assumed by each of the teachers could be seen by the number of codes recorded in each cell. The primary activity was circled and an arrow drawn to the second most frequent activity. The final frequency chart for each team is addended to this report.

The coding schema appeared to function very well for the purpose for which it was designed. It might prove helpful, however, to include additional coding time. The teachers and teaching teams have very different styles and strengths which could be verified by the frequency charts. Additional comments which were noted by the observers will help with the interpretation of the frequency data. These valuable observations were possible because of the lapse of time between coding periods.

Three types of interactive teaching were initially identified. One type of teaming seemed most evident when skill areas were identified. In this type of interaction both teachers feel very comfortable with the content and tend to exchange lead roles frequently. The second kind of teaming is when one teacher feels strong in content and the other is a good facilitator. In this scenario, the facilitator used all of her skill to allow the lead teacher and the majority of the students to keep on task with content by solving problems and clarifying procedures. These teachers tend to be unobtrusive but far more purposive than an aide would be. They tend to be reteaching even as they deal with discipline and procedural matters and appear to use skills of inquiry with students rather than merely answering questions. The third type of team is one in which both teachers are highly skilled facilitators. In this configuration, the material itself may be presented directly from a textbook or shown with a filmstrip but there is a high level of question/recitation and the activities are multiple and involve small group work. Both teachers in turn spend time preparing material and speaking to groups. As might be predicted, a fourth type of situation was observed. Here there were two teachers in the room but one was doing all of the teaching while the other was acting as an aide or disciplinarian or simply observing. This cannot be considered teaming because it is not interactional for both professionals.

This research will be continued with a larger number of observations which will allow stronger generalizations. Special educators ought to be observed within more than one teaming situation. Male team members and observers need to sought out to be sure that female bias is not skewing the data. By including interviews in the continuing research, it might be possible to develop models for consideration by teachers who are contemplating or preparing for working in interactive teaching teams.

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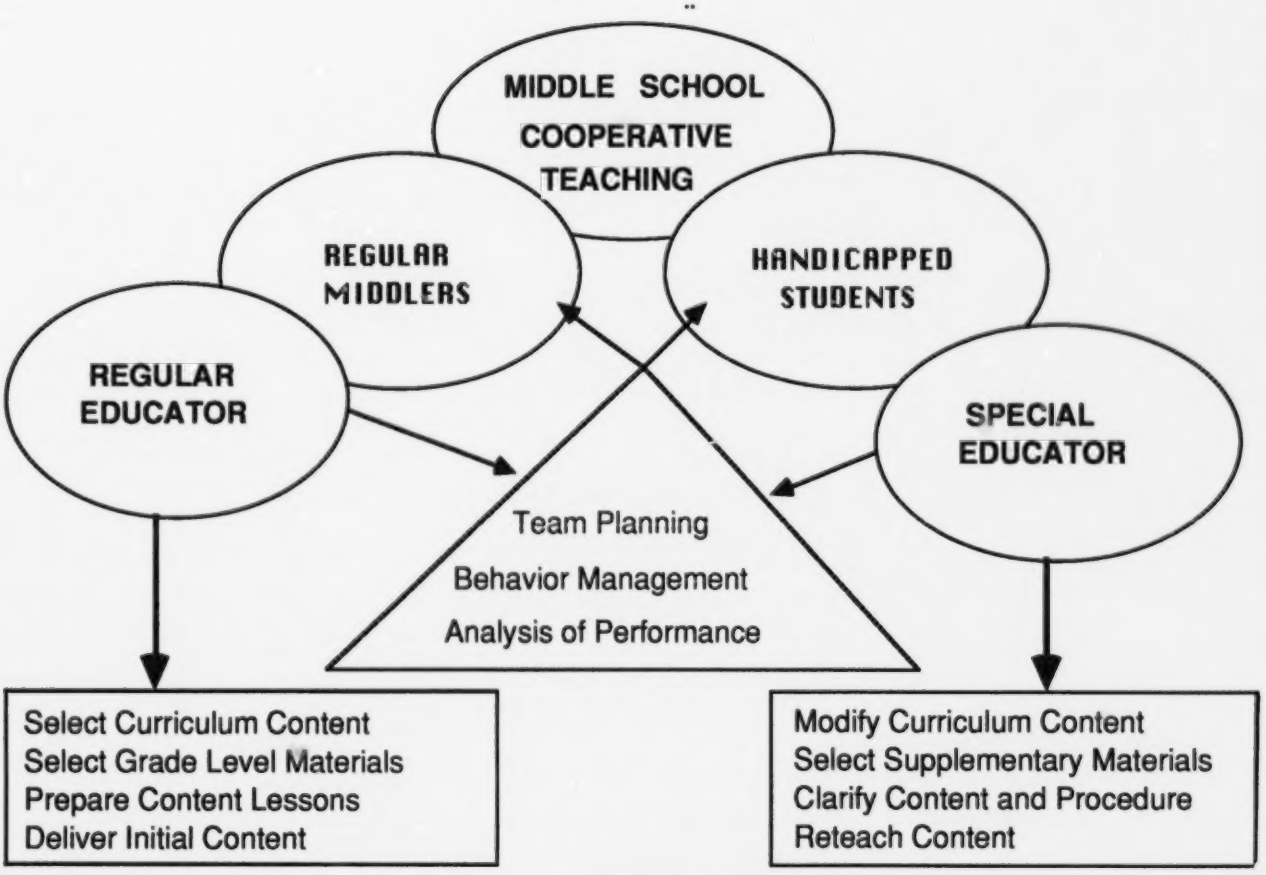
MIDDLE SCHOOL
COOPERATIVE
TEACHING
REGULAR
MIDDLERS
HANDICAPPED
STUDENTS
REGULAR
EDUCATOR
SPECIAL
EDUCATOR
Team Planning
Behavior Management
Analysis of Performance
Select Curriculum Content
Select Grade Level Materials
Prepare Content Lessons
Deliver Initial Content
Modify Curriculum Content
Select Supplementary Materials
Clarify Content and Procedure
Reteach Content

Figure One

FORM FOR CHECKING CODES FOR EACH TEACHER
Use 3 charts per teacher--for beginning, middle and end of period.

Min	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		A	B	C	D
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													

Figure Two

FREQUENCY CHART FOR EACH OBSERVATION
INTERACTION CODING

Regular Educator

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Special Educator

	A	B	C	D

Figure Three